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WRL NEWS

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CALENDAR ORDERS ROLLING

If you haven't ordered yours yet, do it now. Edited by Lynne Shatzkin Coffin and Wendy Schwartz, with an introduction by Benjamin Spock, WRL's 1975 Peace Calendar carries us back to the land of our birth—childhood—to explore ways of raising children so they will bring the freedom with which they were born into the society we all must share. Prose, poetry, songs, drawings, photographs. $2.75 each, $5 for two. Postpaid.

A POSSIBLE LIFE SENTENCE—FOR POSSESSING LEAFLETS?

No, not in Pinochet's Chile or Franco's Spain—in England. The victims are 14 pacifists, including John Hyatt, a member of WRI's national council. Their "crime": possession of leaflets addressed to British soldiers "discontented" about their supposed peacekeeping role in Northern Ireland.

Homes of 6 of the pacifists were raided on September 10. A hearing has been postponed twice and was set for November 20, the day chosen by WRL to picket the British Mission to the United Nations in New York. WRI had picketed the British Embassy in Brussels on October 27.

All 14 British pacifists have been charged with "conspiracy" which carries a maximum of life in prison, and 12 are charged under the 1934 Incitement to Disaffection Act, which carries a maximum of 2 years.

Pat Arrowsmith presently is serving an 18-month sentence for distributing similar leaflets addressed to soldiers. You can express your solidarity by writing Pat Arrowsmith, H.M. Prison, Parkhurst Rd., London N7, England. You can voice your protests over prosecution of the 14 pacifists by writing Home Secretary Roy Jenkins, Home Office, Whitehall, London SWIA 2AP, England.

FY 1975 FOREIGN AID BILL

Will reach the House Floor during the week of December 9. Sponsors are being sought for an amendment to reduce Cambodia's military aid ceiling to $200 million. In addition, an effort will be made to reduce South Vietnam's economic aid ceiling of $420 million on "PostWar Reconstruction" and $50 million for "Food for Peace". Urge your representatives to vote *for* these reductions. Send a telegram to Washington or call your local Congressional District Office.

WEEK OF CONCERN

On Wall Street the "Post-War War" slide show was shown on the wall of a tiger cage.
Photo by Grace Hedemann

The International Week of Concern for victims of the Indochina War—political prisoners in South Vietnam, and war resisters, deserters, and less-than-honorable-discharges from the United States Armed Forces—was observed during the week of September 29 through October 6.

It was marked by demonstrations, press conferences, cultural events, fasts, liturgies, etc., in more than 100 cities in the U.S., Canada, Europe, and New Zealand according to Don Luce, national coordinator of publicity. WRL groups in at least 13 cities took part in the activities.

The Thomas Merton Unity Center/WRL sponsored an action where more than a

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WEEK OF CONCERN *(continued from page 1)*

dozen persons rode buses in Isla Vista and Santa Barbara (California) repaying people for their bus rides with money recycled from war tax dollars. More than $75 of withheld taxes was converted into quarters. These quarters were then taped to a leaflet declaring, "We give you this money for bus fare instead of supporting the U.S. defense budget. We have chosen to not pay that portion of our taxes that is used for warmaking activities. By giving this money to you instead we hope to actively demonstrate that tax money can be spent to improve the quality of life." The leaflet went on to explain the alternative tax fund and to outline the continuum of options open to those wishing not to pay war taxes. It also included graphs of how defense dollars could be better spent: "One B-1 bomber or fifteen 50-bed public hospitals."

The response to the leafletting was tremendous. Whether aboard the buses or at the bus stops, people were very interested in hearing more about war tax resistance, and nearly everyone agreed that our tax dollars could be better spent.

We also staffed a tiger cage vigil at the University of California at Santa Barbara and helped host a Vietnamese dinner to benefit the Quang Nai Rehabilitation Hospital.

Oak Park (Illinois) WRL, a new WRL local, set up a tiger cage display and leafletted in the shopping area of Oak Park.

Columbia (Missouri) WRL, another new local, co-sponsored a multi-faceted series of events during the Week of Concern with the local FOR, and Missouri Peace Studies Institute. The Week began by leafletting at the University of Missouri (Columbia) homecoming game on the theme of "homecoming for war resisters". A "white elephant" sale was held to raise money for Medical Aid to Indochina and the rebuilding of Bach Mai Hospital in Hanoi. Next, 50 people demonstrated in front of the Federal Building for universal and unconditional amnesty. Dave Dellinger spoke at the University to round out the week.

Muncie (Indiana) CNVA-WRL, a new local, had a successful slide show and literature table during the Week.

Morgantown WRL held a demonstration in front of the County Court House and showed a slide show on political prisoners in South Vietnam. A literature table was also set up.

Iowa City WRL sponsored a local folksinger on the University of Iowa campus which drew a good crowd, during which short speeches on political prisoners and amnesty were made. The music provided the tool needed to open people up. Buttons and leaflets were distributed.

Hawaii WRL/Catholic Action organized a tiger cage vigil in Honolulu and Camp Smith. In addition, there were film showings and former POW Bob Chenowith spoke.

Plains/Midwest WRL started the Week in Kansas City with a Vietnamese dinner. A tiger cage and leafletting was set up at the Plaza shopping center with a dozen participants in the center of the 1975 National Auto Show. A display on political prisoners was set up at St. Paul's School of Theology with the local FOR. Films on liberation were shown during the whole month of October.

Greater New Bedford (Mass.) WRL, a new local, distributed leaflets and showed the film *Amnesty or Exile?* during the Week.

Detroit WRL focused on the U.S. government's attempted deportation of Vietnamese citizens living in the U.S. A demonstration was held across from the City-County Building.

Atlanta Workshop in Nonviolence sent about 50 information packets to clergy, professors, newspaper editors, etc. Kate Sheehan gave a presentation on "South Vietnamese Women: Prisoners, Poets, Pacifists" to the Atlanta Women's Center. The first of a series of seminars on war tax resistance began that week. A community of people came together each night for 6 days, fasting on rice and having a dialogue on what is in the Mennonite booklet *Release Us from Bondage: 6 days in a Vietnamese Prison.* From this group actions such as picket lines in front of federal buildings, etc., were undertaken.

WRL National Office joined with a number of other groups, principally CALC, Catholic Peace Fellowship, NCUUA, Americans for Amnesty to stage a series of tiger cage actions and a Vietnamese cultural night. The Week began with a CPF organized chain-in and leafletting in front of St. Patrick's Cathedral. Nine were arrested. Each successive day a tiger cage was set up in a different location: Grand Central Station, U.S. Mission to the U.N. (12 were arrested), Wall Street, Port Authority Bus Terminal, and Columbia University. During the Week, an estimated 18,000 leaflets were distributed.

HELP COMPOSE THE '76 CALENDAR

It was decided at the WRL National Conference that the theme of the 1976 calendar will be Nonviolence in U.S. History. There will be entries on movements (the movement to boycott British goods before the Revolution), on institutions (Hopedale Community), on some individuals (Josiah Warren), and on specific events (the nonviolent strike in the Reading, Pennsylvania knitting mills in 1937). We need people to help with research, writing entries and locating good visual material. If interested, please contact Larry Gara, 21 Faculty Place, Wilmington, Ohio 45177, phone (513) 382-3569.

BLACK-AND-WHITE ARMBANDS IN BOSTON VIGIL

Symbolizing the objective of their vigil—peaceful integration of the schools—participants wear black-and-white armbands put together by two WRLers, Henry and Sue Bass.

The vigil, at City Hall Plaza, is conducted from 11:30 to 2 every school day by a coalition of peace people including WRLers. A spokesman for the vigilers stressed the importance of demonstrating visibly that the overwhelming majority of Bostonians care about children of all races and are not in sympathy with the white racist outbreaks in South Boston, following the court order for school integration.

SUBMIT NOMINATIONS BY DECEMBER 20

All nominations for the WRL executive and national committees should be submitted to the League office by December 20. Any WRL member may submit a nomination. However, nominations submitted by less than five members are subject to the approval of the executive committee as a prerequisite to being on the ballot. Persons nominated for the executive committee must be able to attend meetings in New York City. There are 16 vacancies out of 48 to be filled this year—8 executive committee and 8 national committee (2 each from the West, Midwest, South, and East). The terms of the following are expiring: executive committee—David Berkingoff, Connie Bleakley, Maris Cakars, Ann Davidon, Gwen Reyes, Wendy Schwartz, Joanne Sheehan, Allan Solomonow, Irma Zigas; national committee—Bob Eaton, Marj Swann, Scott Herrick, Steve Sumerford, Seth Foldy, William Reichert, Ira Sandperl, Denny Wilcher.

EUROPEAN ANTI-MILITARISM CONGRESS

by Ed Hedemann

It is hard to imagine how over 200 people representing 90 organizations from a dozen countries (including some Czech exiles), speaking four languages through faulty headsets (for translation), and coming from very different ideological directions could ever agree on anything in two days' time. They didn't.

But that isn't what the European Anti-Militarism Congress which met in cold, rainy Brussels from October 18-20 was all about. The Congress represented a first step towards a continental unification of peace organizations against the common oppressor–militarism. It also provided a forum for exchange of viewpoints to better understand our differences, and possibly the best part–meeting the people (especially friends like WRI staff members Craig Simpson, Lani and Joe Gerson).

The recent moves of the War Resisters' International and the International Fellowship of Reconciliation together in the same spacious building in Brussels facilitated the coordination of the Congress (begun four months ago by WRI). The relocation of the headquarters in Brussels was not without problems (aside from French not being as common a language to the WRI staff as English and all who live in Belgium must carry I.D. cards). The postman refused to hand over a registered letter sent to WRI because he suspected it came from an anarchist organization! Heated arguments by the staff and a visit to the P.O. by Jean van Lierde, vice-president of WRI, still could not release the letter.

A major in the Belgian army and editor of a right-wing magazine wanted to participate in the Congress. As a result of this, expected police surveillance of the sessions, and to eliminate the possibility of some organizations "packing" the Congress, identification badges were issued. Not to be outdone, the major plastered the areas of the Free University of Brussels where the Congress sessions were being held with signs proclaiming "OUI, L'Armee," praising the need for a military and warning against subversives.

The Congress, however, got off to a nice start on Friday with a press conference, meeting of some WRI section delegates, and evening entertainment by a popular Belgian folk singer. It was at the WRI meeting of section delegates where we first learned of the repression coming down in Britain against pacifists.

The first plenary began Saturday morning with an excellent key note address by Norwegian professor Johan Galtung about the changing role of the world's militaries and alliances. Galtung presented evidence which indicated a shift from horizontal warfare (between major powers) to vertical warfare (use of military for increased repression–domestically and within the sphere of influence of a country) particularly by the U.S. and U.S.S.R. He cited the cooperation between many countries on techniques of riot and population control, torture, and detection devices (partly as a result of detente). Galtung noted a breakdown of multilateral pacts (and agreements) and a shift to bi-lateral or "favored nation" agreements.

Galtung suggested that we set up *real* disarmament conferences simultaneously with and near the false ones (e.g., SALT I and II). He also suggested we pursue the military personnel and point out their true roles (as opposed to the supposed "defense" role); pursue the scientists who are basically apolitical, and find *alternatives* to military work for them. Countries should become more dependent on their own resources rather than exploiting those of other (usually third world) countries. We must provide domestic alternatives to exploiting third world countries (the military wants to eliminate those alternatives). For more on Galtung's views, read *WAR RESISTANCE* no. 6, 1974. 75 cents. Available from WRL.

There were seven working commissions which met three times and reported twice to the Congress plenaries:

Commission One–Role of NATO and Warsaw Pacts–this one was the most divided. In particular, two of WRI German sections (DFG-IDK and VK) and one Swiss section objected to any criticism of the Warsaw Pact as tantamount to heresy, claiming that wars were solely a result of capitalism. Though these sections are pacifist, they are not ideologically nonviolent! The only thing agreed upon by the commission was to spread more information about NATO. Progress?

Commission Two–Military-Industrial Complex, arms trade, etc.–a major division occurred here between the majority who wanted to discuss plans for action campaigns, and those who wanted first to define and analyze the M-IC. Here one of the few concrete actions to come out of this Congress was to set up an international campaign opposing the Multi-Role Combat Aircraft and the Nordic Consortium fighter planes (four countries joining together to purchase the planes). Calls for international action against arms shipments and suggestions for an international conference on the military-industrial complex were made.

Commission Three–Resistance in the Military–a long-winded series of barely comprehensible resolutions about support of soldiers who want to liberalize military regulations or resist the military.

Commission Four–Alternatives to the Military–"alternatives" seems to have had two entirely distinct meanings to different people: nonviolent civilian defense of country or alternative institutions. A point was made that the alternative institutions concept seems to have made headway only in the U.S. and U.K. The link with anti-militarism and need for alternative institutions was illustrated by the following four points:

1) heightens awareness
2) provides a working example of a society without a military
3) provides an alternative structure to work against militarism
4) provides a community of support for people in the resistance and other political activities so they won't "burn out"

Commission Five–Total Resistance to Conscription–this is somewhat of a new concept to Europeans (except to the French) where being a C.O. is the "correct" political position if you're a pacifist, Marxist, or simply an anti-militarist. There was a lot of opposition to this new campaign for draft resistance initiated by Jean Fabre of IFOR, but the trend is growing.

Commission Six–Militarism and Domestic Politics (e.g., repression)–the person giving the report to the plenary was extremely verbose, boring everyone. To top it off, almost everyone from her commission rejected her report as inaccurate!

Commission Seven–Conscientious Objection–the basic idea which came out was that C.O.'s ought to be able to choose their alternative service.

During the final plenary of the Congress, a rather tame, noncontroversial three paragraph draft of a press statement was read for approval. Though this statement seemed so mild as not even worth issuing, there were immediate and intense objections to it! The phrase that seemed to cause the most problems was "We have examined the decadent and deadly roles of NATO and the Warsaw Pacts . . ." A suggestion to change "NATO and the Warsaw Pacts" to "militaries" made the statement worth even less. A characteristic ending to the rather divided–but valuable–Congress. Fortunately, the value of the Congress did not reside simply with resolutions, but more importantly establishing contacts with the many like-minded people from all over Europe.

CONFRONTING THE CRISIS

by David McReynolds

(At the WRL National Conference, a Task Force on the Domestic Crisis was set up, headed by Norma Becker. Following the first meeting, September 27, the following slightly edited paper was prepared by David McReynolds for circulation. Present at the September 27 meeting were representatives from the Fellowship of Reconciliation, Southern Christian Leadership Conference, American Friends Service Committee, Clergy and Laity Concerned, Women Strike for Peace, and the trade union movement. The next–and expanded–meeting of the Task Force will be December 14 in Atlanta, Georgia.)

We are deeply involved in a domestic crisis. For many millions in this country the crisis is not new. Those in minority groups and the non-unionized section of the working class have lived for decades with bad housing, lack of medical care, inferior education for their children, lack of proper food, extremely high unemployment, and jails and prisons as community institutions. Even when the national unemployment rate has dropped to a "low" of 4%, it has been twice that for non-whites and even higher among young non-whites who are lacking in skills. Much of this poverty has been hidden from us by our social structure: it consisted of farm laborers, older citizens, groups in the population without real political clout.

What is new is that poverty is not a slowly vanishing blight, but is spreading upward in American society. Real wages have dropped. Even the wage increases of organized labor do not keep pace with inflation and unorganized workers are desperate. The economic pinch cannot be blamed only on the increase in the cost of oil. The problem is that the world situation has changed and American capital has lost its power to control the market and over-value the dollar. To maintain the profit margin of corporations it has been necessary to cut the margin granted workers. (And profit margins have been maintained–during the oil crisis last winter the oil companies made exceptional profits and most corporations have reported large profits even as the nation moved deeper into recession.)

Unemployment today stands near 6% with figures for *under*-employment obviously much higher and with no figures for those who have simply stopped looking for work and are no longer considered part of the job market. There is every reason to believe the situation will continue to worsen.

We are trapped with a foreign policy which violates our deepest values. Our government supports summary executions in Chile, Tiger Cages in Saigon, mass arrests in South Korea. We must face the reality that to a great extent our foreign policy is one of murder. We must realize that a system which unleashes terror against social revolution elsewhere will probably not function within constitutional restraints here in our own country if any serious movement for social change emerges.

That is one side of the picture–depressing enough. It becomes more depressing if we pause and look for a moment at a fairly modest "agenda for America"–a realistic program of needs that could be met by this nation, the richest on the planet. It is an agenda that might be difficult or impossible for poor nations to take on, where the hard choices might not be between the luxuries of guns or butter, but between housing or medical care. It becomes all the more shameful that we, who might long ago have met this agenda, have yet to take serious action on it. Such an agenda would include:

–full employment,–control of inflation,–end of racism,–decent housing,–decent medical care,–equal rights for women, –radical tax reform,–mass transit people can afford,–humane care and opportunities for the aged,–de-militarization of our society,–overhauling of the public education system,–abolition of the CIA and end of domestic police repression,–a foreign policy that is democratic.

We know what interests would be served by meeting this agenda–the interests of the overwhelming majority of our people. We must ask what interests are served by *not* meeting it, and what excuses the system can offer for not seriously tackling it. We are not focusing our anger on Ford. We have had square deals, new deals, and fair deals. We had new frontiers and a war on poverty. Poverty is still here, the new frontier is still beyond the horizon, and all we have to show for it is the largest and most expensive military machine in the world.

Our current combination of exceptionally high prices and rising unemployment are, of course, a domestic crisis–but they have forced us to realize that this immediate crisis, which now hits some of those in the white middle class, is only a continuation of the failure of our system to meet the minimum human needs of literally tens of millions of Americans.

The economic crisis deepens the racial crisis. Not simply because it creates tensions between whites and non-whites in job competition, but because the frustrations and desperation of unrelieved poverty produce the drug addiction, crime, and riots which increase white fears and speed the flight of middle class whites from the city. The economic crisis brings the American people into confrontation with their own military machine, because the bulk of our federal tax dollars go toward weapons systems, not toward social planning and social benefits. The economic crisis threatens the trade union movement because it is more difficult to organize labor and easier to break unions when unemployment is high.

The economic crisis threatens our democratic system. Part of the mythology of our nation is that our freedom is based on our "free enterprise". It should now be clear that, on the contrary, our freedom is threatened by our economic failure. Watergate shows us not "how strong the system is" but how weak and fragile. Nixon wasn't stopped by the law in all its majesty, not by a Congress rising in constitutional outrage, but by accidents and maverick individuals who, by the grace of God, fell across Nixon's path. If Nixon moved as close as he did toward a neo-fascist state as his response to a peace movement that did no more than question our foreign policy, what response is the government likely to make to a movement that raises questions about the need for profound social change in the economic institutions of the nation? We must add the question: if democratic radical change is difficult *now*, will it be possible at all if we continue to wait? Is there not a point after which our own military machine will become the absolute threat to our democracy?

Regretfully we have no viable Left in America, no coherent and serious Left which could provide the leadership on a range of issues, from fighting to block Rockefeller's confirmation to demanding public ownership of energy resources. Yet we ourselves must move. The crisis will not go away or abate simply because there is no one at hand to deal with it–on the contrary, it will deepen. In the absence of other forces that can act, we must act. We view it as significant that elements of the peace movement, the trade union movement, and movement for human rights have met for this discussion. Our areas of agreement are more significant than our differences.

(continued on page 5)

PRISONERS FOR PEACE

Federal Prison, Ashland, KY 41101
James Drigger, David Ganger, William James Moran, Johnnie Mack Morgan, Ira Walker

Federal Prison, El Reno, OK 73036
Steve Bezich

Federal Prison, Lompoc, CA 93436
Richard Beatty, Augustus Dizerega

Federal Prison, McNeil Island, Steilacoom, Washington 98388
Johnny Baranski

Federal Prison, Petersburg, VA 23803
James Sagar

Federal Prison, Sandstone, MN 55072
Tom Smit

Federal Prison, Tallahassee, FL 32302
Fulton Clark

Federal Prison, Terminal Island, San Pedro, CA 90731
Martha Tranquilli

Federal Prison, Terre Haute, IN 47808
Nicholas Riddell

Federal Prison, Oxford, WI
Jesse Guerra

Federal Prison, Pleasanton, CA
Scott Paterson

U.S. Public Health Hospital, San Francisco, CA 94114
Peter Marcovitch

The following are in military detention or in military prisons:
Disciplinary Barracks, Drawer A, Ft. Leavenworth, KA 66027.
Dan Hodge, Dave Locklin.

This list may appear inordinately short–and it is. The reason is that some 85 peace prisoners, as of this date, are released on furlough pending their opportunity to appeal to Ford's Clemency Board. Whether those who refuse to do so will be returned to prison, cannot be determined right now.

CONFRONTING THE CRISIS *(continued from page 4)*

We are agreed that if human needs cannot be met within our present economic system, then that system itself must be brought into question and thought given to what alternatives are open, what means are needed to achieve the necessary changes. We are agreed the crisis we face is too grave to think in terms of a six month program. We have to think in terms of several years of work in building a coalition raising the issues, and launching a sustained action program as quickly as possible.

The degree to which the necessary and profound social change can be achieved peacefully and democratically depends entirely on how seriously we recognize the crisis, how deeply we commit ourselves to resolving it. Lack of a cohesive and organized struggle, and of genuine leadership, will mean the kind of random violence–and violent repression–which could doom any chance for the changes necessary to make of our collection of states a community of communities, responsible toward its own people, and no longer oppression those who live at a distance from us. As the bi-centennial year approaches it is not enough to dream old dreams over. We need new dreams--and the will to make of them a reality.

REPORT FROM BRUSSELS

by Craig Simpson

It's been busy in our office here in Brussels since early September with meetings, traveling, countless mailings. Typewriters are constantly being pounded on, door bells and telephones ringing, visitors and staff meetings. And the rain here only stops to rest for a few hours then continues to soak us. Despite all this our work has seemed more meaningful and serious.

Today, October 27, after our first demonstration in Brussels, at the British embassy, we received word that the 14 British pacifists whose arrest we were protesting had been charged with "conspiracy" which carries a life sentence. Saturday we heard from Toma Sik of the Israeli section of WRI about the impending draft of a number of its members. He and other members of the section mean to resist. News came last week that Ulrich Wildberger is beginning his four month sentence in Switzerland and Dalmazio Bertulessi was arrested in Italy for their part in the International Resistance campaign. Jean Fabre, one of the organizers of the campaign who works upstairs with IFOR can be arrested any day for his refusal to cooperate with the French military and risks a 2 year prison sentence. War Resistance is making an impact, but taking its toll.

After our return from Larzac, Markus left the staff, Joe worked harder and longer on the anti-militarist Congress and a new issue of War Resistance, Karl took a short vacation in Germany. And Ullie, Lani, Jean Louis and I got working on the thousands of little bureaucratic tasks we keep finding for ourselves. But gradually, we have each been finding the areas we function best in.

Ullie went to Strasbourg, France, to participate in the joint action of European resisters at the European parliment. They went to burn their military orders and to stand against conscription in the first International Resistance Campaign. But the action was somewhat coopted by the smiling, apologetic bureaucrats who said they had no responsibility in this affair. The campaign became more of a community then a movement–a community of international resisters–French, Italian, German, Swiss.

In the first weeks of October, I visited a number of Vietnamese delegations in Paris to familiarize myself with the crises situation in Vietnam on my way to the Stockholm Conference International Hearings in Geneva. I stayed 5 days with Thich Nhat Nhan and Cao Ngoc Phuong, well known Vietnamese pacifists exiled to Sceaux, France, and working at the Vietnamese Buddhists Peace Delegation. How can I describe adequately the beauty and importance of this meeting? It was filled with love and friendship. They shared with me an understanding of nonviolence not in the tactical sense, but spiritually. I helped them a little with translation and orphan dossiers. It was quite heartbreaking to see the faces of thousands of children whose parents are ill, in prison, sick or dead. The real tragedy of war stares at you from the brown dossiers. While in Paris I again visited the PRG.

The rain continues to drown us, the work piles up and sometimes over the desks and the typewriters never seem to stop, but at least we see why there is an international office. War resistance needs communication, but most of all participation. It's important to us that we get a note from you. Sometimes your work seems meaningless, but it all has its effect and should be shared with others. Think about joining us in July for our gathering of pacifists here in Belgium from all over the world for the WRI Triennial.

EXILES CALL BOYCOTT OF FORD PLAN

by Jack Colhoun, Amex/Canada

The electricity in the air was sufficient to power the TV camera lights when 200 exiles and their wives packed the hall at the International Exile Conference in Toronto on the weekend of September 21-22.

President Ford's fake clemency transformed what would have been a relatively small conference with delegates from Sweden, France, Britain and cities across Canada into a spontaneous show of mass support for the boycott of the so-called "earned re-entry program".

Official delegates representing the nine exile organizations voted unanimously for the boycott. As they defined it, the boycott allows direct challenges to the board by those who wish to return to the U.S. and refuse to sign the oath of allegiance and the pledge to do alternative service. Those who defy the program, they agreed, should do so through NCUUA "in the context of a campaign for universal and unconditional amnesty and a campaign to end U.S. aggression in Indochina".

From right: Irma Zigas (WRL and NCUUA); Jon Steinberg (NCUUA); Steve Kinneman (American Deserters Committee, Sweden); Darryl Adams (Vancouver American Exiles Association); Fritz Efaw (Union of American Exiles in Britain); Larry Svirchev (Montreal American Exiles for Total Amnesty); Paul Copeland (Toronto lawyer for AMEX-CANADA).

Photo by Bruce Beyer/AMEX-CANADA

Future Plans

Representatives of all the groups present emphasized that they will make every effort to warn exiles of the traps in the Ford program through counselling, the media, demonstrations, public meetings and speaking tours. Demonstrations were set for U.S. consulates in Canadian and European cities on October 5th in conjunction with the International Week of Concern, sponsored by NCUUA and the United Campaign for Peace in Indochina.

Buoyed by the enthusiasm for the boycott among exiles, including many who had not related to the amnesty struggle in the past, conference participants had high hopes that its success will arouse U.S. public awareness of the total inadequacy of the Ford "clemency" and of the continuing American intervention in Indochina.

The first action of the Conference was a boycott resolution, passed by acclamation, which explicitly linked amnesty and the war:

Be it resolved that we, as Americans and former Americans, in resistance to the ongoing Indochina war, demand an immediate end to American aid to the dictatorial regimes of Thieu, Lon Nol, and the reactionary forces in Laos. We also demand a strict implementation of the Paris agreements.

Be it further resolved that we wholeheartedly reject the concept of punitive repatriation. For those draft resisters and deserters in exile and underground in the U.S., for the more than half a million Vietnam-Era veterans with punitive less than honorable discharges, and for those with criminal records or subject to prosecution because of their active opposition to the war, we continue to demand universal, unconditional amnesty.

Deserter "Loophole" Discussed

At the time of the conference the "deserter loophole" was still thought to exist, generating considerable discussion. Most participants felt that if it did exist, its purpose was to divide war resisters and to defuse the amnesty movement. They concluded that a Clemency Discharge is at least as bad as the Undesireable Discharge it would replace after alternative service, since it brands the recipient for life as a deserter; bad discharges mean exclusion from veterans' benefits and possible denial of jobs, credit, and even life insurance. A resolution was passed demanding a single-type discharge for all veterans and decent benefits for all veterans, including those who currently have less than honorable discharges.

The conference organizers brought home the anti-imperialist character of the amnesty movement by inviting representatives of the Association of Vietnamese Patriots in Canada, the Toronto Chilean Association, and the Toronto Committee for the Liberation of the Portuguese African Colonies. A resolution expressing solidarity with these struggles passed overwhelmingly.

On Monday, September 23, the NCUUA Steering Committee met at the Conference site, enabling Committee members to exchange ideas and viewpoints with exiles. At a joint news conference, which was well-attended by the American and Canadian news media, NCUUA expressed total support for the boycott of the earned re-entry program announced by the exiles and called upon war resisters underground and in U.S. jails to join with them in rejecting the Ford clemency fraud.

ASSEMBLY TO SAVE THE VIETNAM PEACE AGREEMENT

January 25, 26, 27
Washington, D.C.

Includes workshops, convocation, candlelight walk to the White House and lobbying Congressional representatives.

For more information: contact Grace Hedemann at the WRL office.